Intractable diarrhoea of infancy and latent otomastoiditis

Sir,

Dr. Dodge's commentary has encouraged me to report my own experience in the same field as Salazar de Sousa et al. The connection between intractable diarrhoea and latent otomastoiditis is well known here also. In the 1930s several articles were published about it in Hungary.

After treatment using fluid and electrolytes had been introduced, we found that if an infant failed to recover after rehydration therapy latent otomastoiditis should be considered. However, an immediate operation resulted in rapid improvement in the patients.

After the second world war latent otomastoiditis with diarrhoea was common. At that time our patients were dystrophic and their general condition was poor as a result of lack of appropriate infant food, unsatisfactory factory hygiene, and the inexperienced of parents. This also accounted for the fact that the late mortality rate in infants was 10 times higher than it is now. Salazar de Sousa et al. mentioned that their patients also suffered from malnutrition.

For 15–20 years, no such patient has presented and thus latent otomastoiditis has almost disappeared. However, it should not be forgotten, and we are grateful that our attention has been drawn to this problem.

References